

CLAIMS

1. A computer docking apparatus for use with a portable computer comprising a cradle member suitable for receiving a portable computer and a base member; an electrical contactor assembly configured to operably engage a corresponding terminal on a computer and attached to the base member; adjustment means that allow the position of the cradle member to be changed relative to the base member from a first position to a second position, such that a portable computer may be inserted into or removed from the cradle when in the first position, and wherein moving the apparatus from the first position to the second position causes the electrical contactor assembly to engage the computer to allow the establishment of power and/or data-transfer connections between the docking apparatus and the computer.
2. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the adjustment means comprises mechanical or electro-mechanical means.
3. Apparatus according to Claim 2 wherein the adjustment means comprises a pivotal connection between the cradle member and the base member.
4. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the base member comprises an under-side tray.
5. Apparatus according to Claim 4 wherein the underside tray has locking means for securing the underside tray to the cradle member in a closed position.
6. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the cradle member has alignment means that ensure that when a portable computer is fully inserted within the cradle that the electrical contactor assembly is accurately aligned with a corresponding terminal on the computer.
7. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the cradle member comprises a main outer body member and an insert member made at least in part of plastics material,

carbon-fibre, rubber or a similar materials that avoid undue wear to the outer case of the portable computer due to repeated insertion and removal.

8. Apparatus according to Claims 6 or 7 wherein the alignment means comprise guide members located on the inside of the cradle member or insert member.
9. Apparatus according to Claim 6 wherein the alignment means comprises an aperture in the insert member at least partly surrounded by a guide wall.
10. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the electrical contactor assembly comprises a slide mount attached to the cradle member either directly or indirectly and biasing means that, in use, bias the mount in a direction towards the corresponding terminal of a portable computer.
11. Apparatus according to Claim 10 wherein the slide mount comprise at least one bore in the slide mount with a pin dimensioned to closely slide within the bore and the biasing means comprises a spring.
12. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the cradle member is fixed to a mounting so that in use the base member moves and the cradle member is static.
13. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the base member is fixed to a mounting so that in use the cradle member moves and the base member is static.
14. Apparatus according to any preceding claim comprising closure means that either allow or prevent a portable computer to be inserted within the cradle.
15. Apparatus according to Claim 14 wherein the closure means is secured in the closed position by means of a high security lock to deter theft.
16. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein the electrical contactor assembly engages a corresponding terminal on the side, rear or underside of a portable computer.

17. Apparatus according to any preceding claim used in a vehicle.
18. A computer docking apparatus for use with a portable computer comprising: a cradle member suitable for receiving a portable computer; a closure member; and an electrical connector assembly that operably makes power and/or data-transfer connections to the computer, the connector assembly being attached to the closure member wherein; the position of the closure member relative to the cradle member may be changed such that the computer may be inserted into or removed from the cradle when the closure member is in the a first position and moving the closure member from this first position to a second position causes the electrical connector assembly to engage the computer to allow power and/or data-transfer connections between the docking apparatus and the computer.
19. A computer docking apparatus for use with a portable computer substantially as described above and/or as illustrated in Figures 1 to 4.